



# DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Newsletter

February, 2018



As I look forward, as President of Autauga County Master Gardeners Association, I am grateful to the membership for putting their trust in me to lead this association through 2018. I am excited and optimistic about 2018 and the wonderful programs ACMGA already has in place.

We have a working and productive Demonstration Garden where vegetables are raised to feed the needy in our community. This garden is also an excellent classroom for the elementary school located one block away. To increase production of this garden to the maximum, a small "pollinator" garden will be placed alongside the Demonstration Garden to entice friendly bees, butterflies and others friendly bugs, to work with the plants for maximum production.

The beautiful flower garden at Prattville has an eye-catching historic chapel as the centerpiece for everyone to enjoy. This garden demonstrates how the use of plants and trees can produce a beautiful, peaceful, relaxing, and fragrant ambiance in the middle of Downtown Historic Prattville.

But, we have not forgotten our education goals for 2018. In partnership with the City of Prattville, 9am to 11am bi-monthly classes will be held at the Doster Center starting off on February 17 at 8:30am with a welcome by Prattville City Mayor, Bill Gillespie. This class is in conjunction with the annual Arbor Day free tree give-away fol-

lowed at 9am by a class on what kind and where to plant your tree. On March 24, you will be thrilled by a presentation by Fred Basset on hummingbirds. May 24, presents an opportunity to learn about growing a beautiful garden followed on July 14 with a presentation on bonsai which is unmatched anywhere! On September 15 learn how to grow free plants by propagating the plants around you. The 2018 classes will close out on November 7 with a demonstration on how to incorporate natural materials into Thanksgiving and Christmas decorations.

And, if we aren't "learned" enough, come to the monthly Lunch & Learn program held at Trinity United Methodist Church at 610 Fairview Avenue in Prattville. The year's scheduled follows on page 12.

There are so many exciting and interesting projects on the horizon it would take the entire "Dirty Digs" to describe them all. So, tune in next issue for more on what to expect in 2018.



## January Meeting Tim McCoy

Our January meeting had lots going on. Darrue Sharpe, Autauga County Extension Coordinator, was the featured speaker. She talked of all that the extension agency had accomplished with our help last year and the new projects that had been started. Darrue also talked about what is in the works for the upcoming year. She said that our help is vital to a lot of the extension's programs. When she mentioned that our volunteer hours were worth \$24.14 per hour, our organization's worth was driven home. We put a lot of hours into making this county a vibrant part of Alabama.

Glenn Huovinen received his award for being named Autauga County Master Gardener of the Year.

Rose McCauley submitted the Autauga Prattville Demonstration Garden project to the AMGA Search for Excellence consideration. The demo garden has donated thousands of pounds of produce to AICC over the years. 2017 saw about 800 pounds harvested.

VP Charlie French has got us a great tour booked for May 16th. A tour of the Jim Scott garden is always a great tour. The garden is inspiring and a great place to visit.

The helpline is getting ready to start up and it was announced that a thank you/refresher pizza party will be held on February 28th at 12:00PM. It will be held at the ACES building in Autaugaville.

The ACMGA/rec. dept. is going to have it's first program February 17th at the Doster Center. It will be  
Continued on page 3



# HOW NOT TO PRUNE A ROSE BUSH

By

Don Armstrong



Picture this scene: it is mid-winter on a windy Saturday afternoon in southern Iowa. The back yard has the over-grown garden area full of dead plants, a 55-gallon drum for burning trash, an old rose bush, and all of the tree leaves have fallen. But, I get ahead of myself.

I graduated from Lamoni Community High School in 1962. This story takes place the winter of 1961-62, the exact date is not in my memory. My brothers and I had one of those “very” important Saturday afternoon serials on the TV we just had to watch. Mother calls from the kitchen and tells me to take out the trash and burn it. Of course, the TV show was more important. The third time Mother called to tell me to take out the trash and burn it, she said “Don Jr.!” and that meant to move now and move quickly.

I grabbed the trash bag and the wooden matches. I did not take a coat. I made a mad dash to the 55-gallon barrel. I dumped the trash in, struck the match, lit the bag, and was back at the TV without missing anything of importance on our TV show.

The next thing I knew was Mother hollering at me again, loudly. It seems a spark from the 55-gallon barrel had flown into the leaves under Mother’s favorite old bush rose. This was a huge bramble of a bush rose too. The rose bush was on fire. It burned to the ground!!!! You talk about being in trouble for many days!!!

But, that old rose bush, that no one could get into the middle to cut out the old canes, came back better than ever the Spring of 1962. I was, finally, forgiven!

Burning a rose bush in not an approved technique for pruning roses!!!!





held in conjunction with the Arbor Day tree giveaway.

Online registration for the 2018 annual state conference in Birmingham is now open. If you go to [ala-bamamg.org](http://ala-bamamg.org), there is a link to the registration page.

There is going to be a work week at the Governor's Mansion. The dates are February 26th, 27th, and 28th. The rain day will be April 1st if those days get rained out. Please call Jane McCarthy at 334-221-9936 so she can get you on the pass list to enter the mansion grounds. Remember no firearms. Anita Schriberg has donated a handmade quilt to ACMGA to be used in the silent auction during the 2018 state conference.

## Spring plant SALE

The 2018 plant sale is planned for April 28th this year. It is time to start getting your ideas ready as to what plants you

might bring to the sale this year. Two and a half months is all we have to get our plants growing potted and repotted. Every day is slipping by and we need lots and lots of plants for everyone to buy. The weather is going to be great with lots of warm sunshine and fellowship. If you feel so inclined, here is a list of the plants asked for at the 2017 plant sale: Bee balm, blue hosta, citronella, fig tree, hostas, lamb's ear, Lenten roses, little jim (magnolia tree), muelin, parsley, sweet shrub, umbrella plant, and vegetables. As always, anything you bring is more than welcome. Lets make this a great plant sale like the ones in the past have been.



## LUNCH AND LEARN

The Lunch and Learn program started the new year in a new location. The program moved from Christ Lutheran Church to Trinity United Methodist Church. The program had grown enough that it was starting to feel crowded. The new location is spacious and is going to be just the right place. Some experimenting with the seating arrangement will give us the optimum arrangement so that everyone will be able to fully enjoy the classes.

Despite the weather for the January program there was a nice turn out of people to hear Advanced Master Gardener Amanda Borden speak on Gardening 101. It is always nice to start the year with a refresher on basic gardening principle. The attendance was 48 people and 25 percent of those were not master gardeners. The 25 percent left with an application for the master gardener class starting in the fall, and everyone left with some new ideas and understanding about gardening.

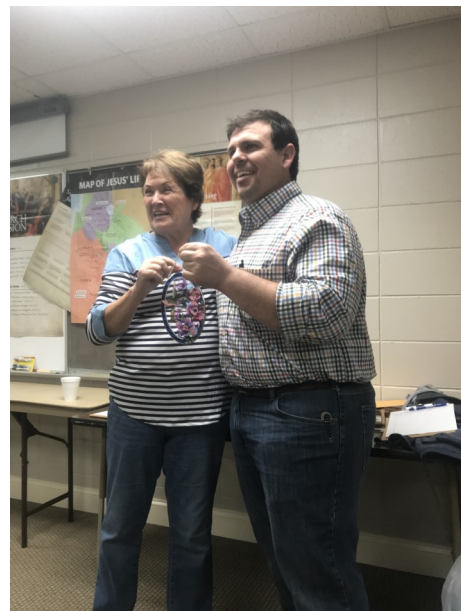
The February program featured Master Rosarian Gloria Purnell from Birmingham. What a great speaker she is. She filled our minds with the different types of roses, and what each was like. Her knowledge of roses seems endless. Gloria gave us lots of ideas on which roses we would like. She also gave the class pointers on pruning correctly and propagating so that we would have great looking roses. This program was attended by 61 people with 17 not being master gardeners.

The fellowship hall will hold about 200 people. With all of us master gardeners actively recruiting our neighbors and getting the word out about this great program I know we can fill the hall. Please, if any of y'all know of a place to put a flyer call Don Armstrong and he will get you as many flyers as you need. If you will look at the program flyer, you will notice that a lot of the presenters have Dr. before their names. These people know their stuff and they are enjoyable to listen to and learn from. Be sure to attend all our Lunch & Learn sessions. ACMGA has the greatest speakers coming to teach and amaze us.



## Hummingbird Award

The recipient of the hummingbird award in January is Patrick Cook. Patrick is always at the workdays, giving the group his strength. And, what he lacks in strength he makes up for in his good humor and his willingness to try anything to get the job done. He took on the task of keeping the grass mowed at Prattville last year. When ever there is a job to be done physically in any of the association's projects last year you could always see Patrick. He has proven himself to be a great addition to the association. The smile he brings to any gathering is contagious, making the work go easier. Congratulations Patrick.



## TIPS FOR GROWING ROSES

From  
**AMERICAN ROSE SOCIETY**  
Submitted by Don Armstrong

At the 2017 Conference in Oneonta I picked up a flyer from the American Rose Society entitled *It's Easy to Grow Roses! Ten Tips to Get Started*.

If you will recall our L&L class taught by Jason Powell, we learned that February is a good month for us to be working on our roses. I have received permission from the American Rose Society to publish their Ten Tips in our February newsletter. At the end of this, I have included the link to become an e-member of the American Rose Society. If you join, you will get a monthly letter on growing roses. You can cancel this service at any time. I did learn from them that we do not have an American Rose Society anywhere close to Prattville.

### 10 Tips to Grow Great Roses!

Today's roses are easier to grown than ever. Hybridizers are producing roses that are fragrant and gorgeous, along with added disease resistance. Here are 10 easy tips to grow healthy, beautiful roses!

**1. YOU CAN PLANT DURING MOST OF THE YEAR.** Roses are sold in pots or as bare-root plants. You can plant potted roses almost year-round in much of the country with Spring and Fall being the best. Bare-root rose should be planted as soon as you get them, in early Spring.

**2. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.** Pick a spot that will give your roses full sun for 4 to 8 hours per day. In hot climates, roses like some afternoon shade. Keep soil moist, but good drainage is a must.

**3. GARDEN FOR ZEN, GROW FOR THE ZONE.** New eye-popping roses arrive every year, so there are always lots of choices. To help guide you:

- Rose developed for your area will perform best in your garden. Visit <http://www.rose.org/rose-care-articles/zone/> to find your zone.
- Visit your local nursery to consider your options or shop on line; visit <http://www.rose.org/nursery/> for a list of rose nurseries that do mail orders and have websites.
- Curious how a particular rose might do in your garden, ask a local rosarian – it's free!! <http://www.rose.org/rose-growing-question/rosarian/>.

Continued on pg. 5



- Learn about your favorite roses at <http://helpmefind.com/>, an online resource and community.

**4. PLANT – A NOUN AND A VERB.** (N.) Do the right basics to plant your roses and they will be productive performers in your garden for years – even decades. (V.) Dig a hole that is wide enough and deep enough for root growth and enrich the soil with organic materials such as garden compost or well-aged manure to get your roses off to a good start.

**5. WATER: KEY TO LIFE.** The best way to establish hearty, vigorous roses is to water deeply so roots grow deep. Soggy soil rots roots and light watering keeps roots too close to the surface.

**6. A LITTLE LOVE GOES A LONG WAY.** Once your roses are established, a little care several times a year is all they need. Prune in early Spring to bring new growth. Also, mulch adds nutrients to keep soil productive and moist. Fertilizing isn't required but can provide a boost.

**7. STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES!** You will enjoy seeing blooms in your first year. Cutting roses and deadheading encourages even more blooms, so enjoy your success. Take time to enjoy your roses, smell them, cut and arrange them, share them, and photograph them!

**8. UH OH!** Don't let the occasional garden pest or rose disease worry you. Expert advice is available from American Rose Society Consulting Rosarians, <http://www.rose.org/rose-growing-question/rosarian/>.

**9. ROSE FRIENDS ARE EVERYWHERE!** There are nearly 300 local rose societies around the country, to find one near you, visit <http://www.rose.org/resources/societies/>.

**10. LEARN MORE!** Now that you have the basics, join the American Rose Society! Receive two American Rose magazines, the *Handbook for Selecting Rose* and more. A 4-month trial membership is only \$10. Or sign up to be an E-member and receive the free monthly Fragrant Rose e-newsletter about growing roses. What are you waiting for? Sign up today at <http://www.rose.org/>!

Reprinted by verbal permission granted to Don Armstrong by Jon Corkern on 21 December 2017.

<http://www.rose.org/resources/e-membership/>

800-637-6534



**American Rose Society**  
The perfect place to experience the world of roses.



PRUNING A CLIMBER - STEP 1



PRUNING A CLIMBER - STEP 2



# PRUNING ROSES OR HOW TO GET STUCK

By  
Don Armstrong



1.

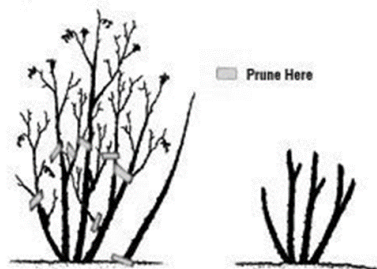


2.



3.

1. I like this photo of Macho Man cutting his roses. Macho Man is working on his roses without gloves. Of course, he is just cutting a dozen for the love of his life, who will have to tend to all of his stuck-up cuts!
2. Wearing gloves is highly recommended. If you can find them, these long-sleeved gloves are great. I have seen them in the garden catalogs and at Petals from the Past. I seem to usually have on short-sleeved shirts when Glenda tells me it is time to prune the roses. I end up with lots of scratches on my arms! Ouch.
3. Macho Man is using the kind of bypass cutters I like to use. The anvil type will crush the stems of roses. Sometimes, especially when cutting out the big old canes, the big boys, loppers, need to come out for the heavy work. The new ratchet type loppers give extra leverage, and we can use less strength.



I like these two clipart photos as they give good tips for pruning back a bush rose. In 2016 Jason Powell talked to us about roses at our Lunch and Learn session. Then we went to Prattvillage Garden for a rose pruning demonstration. At the big gate, next to the Chapel, we had an overgrown bush rose. This was really an overgrown rose, as in eight feet tall! Jason pointed where to cut, and I used my loppers to cut the rose back to about knee high. It has done great since them. We went to the rose bed and cut some smaller roses back to be more like the clipart on the left above. We cut these back to a few canes, the more vigorous canes, and cut the remaining ones back to 12 to 14 inches above the ground. We did not have a tape measure, we just cut them to be below our knees. Tree roses should be cut back to within 6 – 8 inches of the ground. Your climbing hybrid tea roses, like the ones Jason has growing up the telephone poles, should be pruned lightly. For these climbers, remove only weak, diseased, and dead wood while shaping the plant to achieve the growth up your Cinderella's castle.

Continued on pg. 7



Unlike this hapless gardener, do not start with the top of the living plant. Start by removing the dead limbs.



Do not be like this lady, who is pruning back her rose when it is fully leafed out. Prune your roses after the danger of frost has past. Usually this is in mid-February.



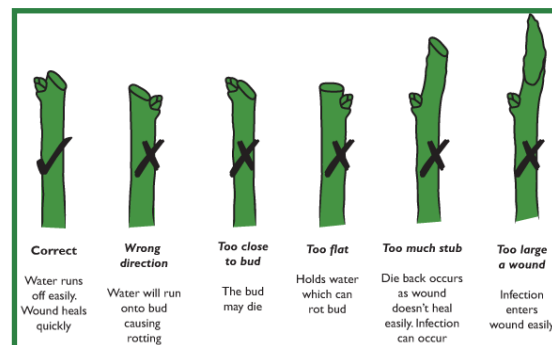
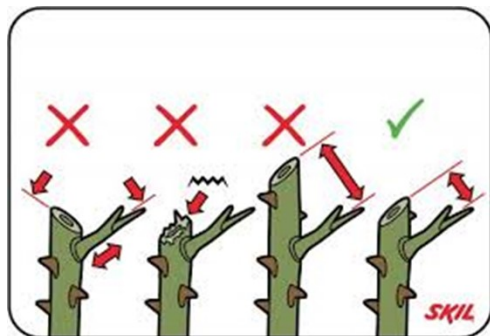
Once you have all of the dead branches removed, stand back and evaluate the plant. How do you want the plant to grow, up your castle like Cinderella, as a bush, or along a fence?



I like this clipart photo as it shows how to train your climber to grow along a fence. If you were at Jason Powell's Petals from the Past rose class a couple of years ago, then you saw how he wacked back on an overgrown climbing rose next to a fence. He selected three of the best canes to be leaders to go left and three to go right. All other canes were then removed. Then he pruned back each of these six canes, as shown in the clipart. This clipart photo is a good guide, but it left some small canes that should have been removed. An overgrown climbing rose can be cut back severely to redirect its growth. At this same class, Jason showed us how to train a climber to grow up Cinderella's castle, a telephone pole. Just north of his garden next to the office are some telephone poles with climbing roses on them. These are worth a look on your next trip to Petals from the Past.

Continued on pg. 8





A lot is made about cutting the rose branch at the correct location and at a 45-degree angle. Well, the location of the cut is very important. But, the 45-degree angle is a bit overblown. In a perfect world, with the rose stem growing exactly vertical, then a 45-degree angle cut may be critical. The whole idea is to not let water stand on top of the cut and cause rot of the stem. The world is not perfect, at least not on our rose bushes, so this 45-degree angle is not an issue. What is critical is where to cut. Example 1. above (left one) I find cute, as I could not get my clippers to be at that angle with the side branch in the way! Example 2. is what happens when using anvil cutters, you get a crushed stem. Examples 3. and 4. are the key ones to look at, and not the 45-degree mark. The goal, I have been told, is to cut about 1/4 inch above the branch you are leaving. I find that by resting my clippers on the branch I am leaving, I get the desired 1/4 inch of the stem remaining. The key when cutting is to be sure to select the correct side branch. The rose is going to grow from this side branch, so be sure it is pointing in the direction you want the rose to grow. Usually you will want to cut to an outside growing branch or bud.

As always, read *ANR-0157 – Growing Roses* for the best guidance on growing your roses. And, get out and prune your roses!





# ***CHILTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS***

## ***PLANT SWAP***

***May 8, 2018***

***10:00 AM***

***Special Guest: Michael Thomason***

***AMGA Vice President***

***Demonstration Garden/CREC***

***120 County Road 756***

***Clanton, AL 35045***

### **What to Bring**

- A plant from your garden (rooted in) or purchased and an identification label
- Any plants you want to share – please make sure plants include a description, bloom time, color of bloom, sun/shade requirements. These can be brought in a box w/plant information on the box
- Covered Dish
- Chair

You don't  
want to miss  
any of these  
seminars.

# 2018 Classes

## Presented by Autauga County Master Gardeners Association & City of Prattville

classes!

All classes are held at the Doster Center at 9:00 am

**February 17**—ARBOR DAY FREE TREE GIVE-AWAY at 8:30 am followed by a teaching class at 9 am at the Doster Center, “Trees and your City.”



**March 24**—“Introduction to Hummingbirds in Alabama” presented by Fred Bassett. Don’t miss this exciting presentation from a man who devotes his live to hummingbirds and travels around the United States banding them.



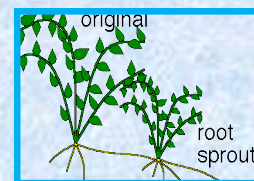
**May 5**— Karen Weber will present “Growing A Beautiful Garden” and share ideas about plants, pruning, ergonomics and bulbs.



**July 14**—”All About Bonsai” presented by Mark Waldo. Learn how to choose plants for bonsai, pruning techniques and examples using the instructor’s many plants. Another class you will not want to miss.



**September 15**— “Tips and Demonstration on Plant Propagation” presented by Rona Watson. Double your plants through propagation.



**November 7**—”Holiday Decorating” presented by Charlotte Hall who will discuss how to decorate for the holidays through natural materials.





## **Baby Blt**

**Prep Time:** 20 minutes **Ready In:** 1 hour, 30 minutes

**Cook Time:** 10 minutes **Servings:** 24

"Cherry tomatoes stuffed with a mixture of bacon, green onion, and mayonnaise. They may be a little time consuming, but worth it to the last bite!"

### **INGREDIENTS:**

1 lb. bacon, cooked and crumbled

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup green onions, chopped

2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

24 cherry tomatoes

### **DIRECTIONS:**

Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium high heat for 6 to 8 minutes, or until evenly brown. Once cooled, crumble and set aside.

In a bowl, stir together the mayonnaise, bacon, green onions, and parsley until well blended. Set aside.

Cut a small slice from the top of each tomato. Using a melon baller or small spoon, scoop out the inside of each tomato and discard. Fill each tomato with the bacon mixture and refrigerate for 1 hour. Serve chilled.

## **Trees and Your City**

### **The Best Fit for the Future**

**Hosted by the**

**Prattville Parks and Recreation Department**

**Alabama Cooperative Extension System**

**And**

**Autauga County Master Gardeners Association**

**Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

**The Foster Center**

424 South Northington Street

Prattville, Alabama 36067

**In conjunction with the Annual  
ARBOR DAY TREE GIVE-AWAY**

**Opening Remarks by Mayor Gillespie  
at 8:45 a.m.**

## **Topics to be Discussed**

**Types of trees best suited for our area.  
What it means to be a Tree City USA  
and how we can help. Trees and utility lines.**

Trees are important to our environment. They release oxygen into the atmosphere and filter harmful gases due to climate change. They also clean and rehabilitate the soil, making them important to our future. However, certain types of trees can be aggressive (think Mimosa and Chinese Tallow) or prone to disease, making them less than desirable. What can we do to help Prattville remain a Tree City USA and plan for the future by proper placement of the trees we plant today.

Instructors: Dale Dickens is a member of the Alabama Wildlife Commission and Ethan James is with Alabama Power .

**Free to the Public, but Pre-Registration is required.**

**To sign-up or for more information, contact the Prattville Parks and Recreation office at 334-595-0800.**



# Lunch and Learn 2018

1st THURSDAY of EVERY Month

12:00-1:00 PM

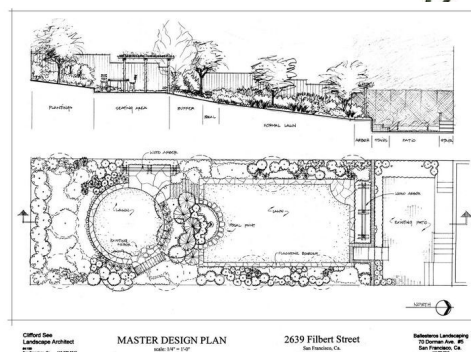
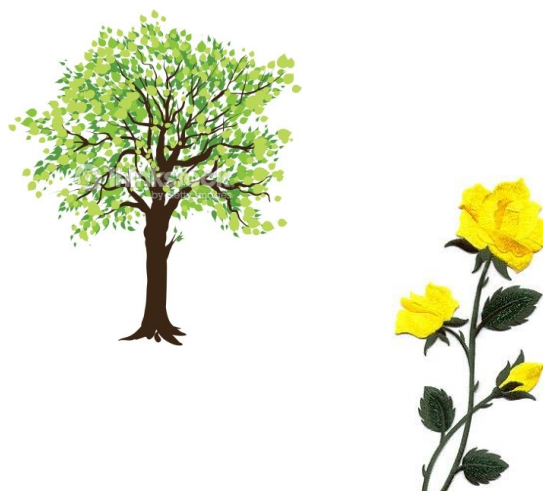
Trinity United Methodist Church  
610 Fairview Avenue, Prattville 36066

- 4 January** Gardening 101  
Amanda Borden, Advanced MG
- 1 February** Roses  
Gloria Purnell, Master Rosarian
- 1 March** Butterflies, Bees, and Other Pollinators  
Dr. David Held, Entomologist AU
- 5 April** Blueberries  
Dr. Chip East, Horticulturist ACES
- 10 May** Figs  
Dr. Arlie Powell, Petals from the Past
- 7 June** Herbs  
Tia Gonzales, Medicinal Plant Garden AU
- 12 July** Cooking with Herbs & Spices  
Janice Hall, Food Safety & Quality, ACES
- 2 August** Plant Propagation  
Don Armstrong, Master Gardener
- 6 September** Drought Tolerant Plants for the South  
Dr. Sue Webb, Petals from the Past
- 4 October** Shade Loving Plants  
Jane McCarthy, Master Gardener
- 1 November** Growing Citrus Trees in Containers  
Tom McLemore, Master Gardener
- 6 December** Insects-Good Guys or Bad Guys  
Dr. Fudd Graham, Entomologist, AU

For more information, contact  
Autauga County Extension Office 334.361.7273

**BRING A SACK LUNCH**

**DRINKS PROVIDED**





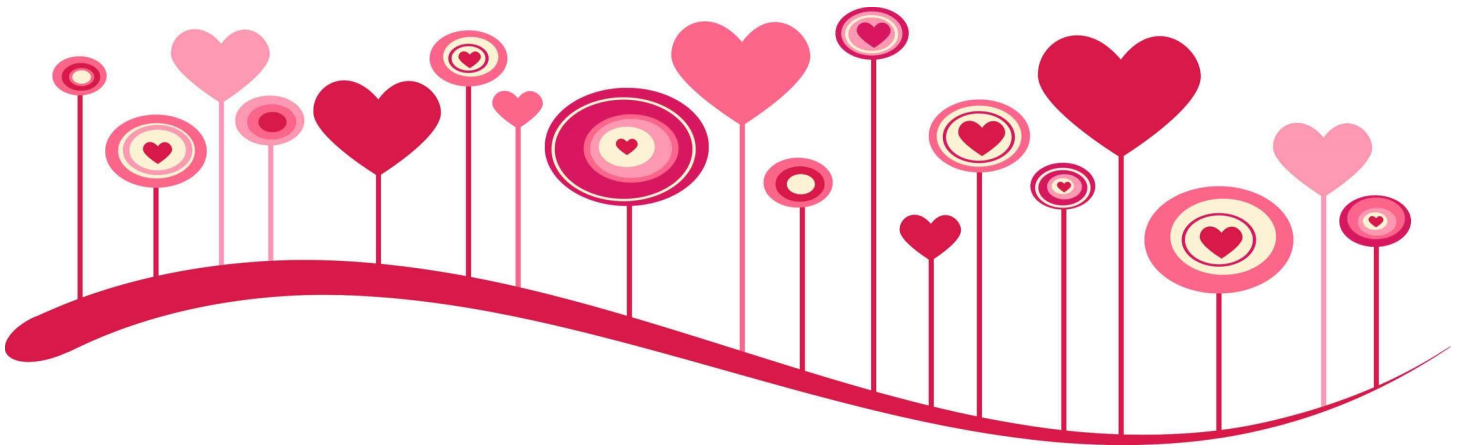
## Monthly Meetings

Second Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church, Prattville (unless otherwise notified)

- ⇒ All odd-numbered months: January, March, May, July, September, November will have 6:00 p.m. meetings.
- ⇒ Most even-numbered months: February, April, June, August, October will have 9:00 a.m. meeting.
- ⇒ February meeting at 9:00 AM with speaker Rachel McGuire.

## Things to do.....

- ♦ Quit thinking about propagating for the plant sale. Start propagating.
- ♦ Prune roses after Valentine's Day.
- ♦ Prune winter flowering shrubs.
- ♦ Plan your vegetable plot. Order your seeds and plug plants.
- ♦ Soil test lawns before setting up fertility programs.



**Autauga County Master Gardeners  
Assoc.  
c/o Autauga County Extension Office  
2226 Highway 14 West  
Autaugaville, AL 36003**

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

To: